Nuclear Tipped Missiles of Pakistan

4172. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL :

SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD :

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a newsitem published in the Hindustan Times dated 17th March, 2000 captioned "Pak readies N-tipped missiles" accordingly to Public Eye Project of the Federation of American Scientists which released satellite images of Islamabad's Nuclear and Missile facilities on internet on 15th March, 2000;

(b) whether it is a fact that Pakistan loaded Nuclear armed M-11 Missiles on trucks in Sargodha and dispersed them around the country; and

(c) if so, what safety/preventive measures taken by Government till date in this regard particularly by ISRO scientists ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government has seen the news report, which is based on the publication of satellite photographs on the Internet by the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) a non-governmental Organisation based in the USA. The photographs, showing Pakistan's special weapons facilities at Kushab and the missile base at Sargodha, were released as part of the FAS's Public Eye project.

(c) Government closely monitors all developments related to Pakistan's unclear and missile capabilities, including the deployment of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery. Government remains fully committed to taking all necessary steps to effectively safeguard India's security and national interest in accordance with its own assessment of threats to our security.

Sending Children abroad on the basis of Fake Passports

†4173. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the business of sending children abroad on the basis of fake passports is being going on very expeditiously in the country;

(b) if so, whether some people have recently been arrested at Indira Gandhi International Airport while doing so; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by Government against them ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) No such incidents have come to the notice of the Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Indian POWs In Pakistani Jails

4174. SHRI ABANI ROY : Will the Ministe of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Indian warriers still languishing in Pak jails" as reported in the Statesman dated 16th April, 2000;

(b) if so, whether a large number of Indian prisoners of War (POWs) are languishing in Pakistani jails;

(c) whether Government have contemplated any efforts to get them released from Pakistani jails; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) According to available information, 54 Indian Prisoners of War (POWs) are believed to be in the custody of Pakistan. However, Pakistan has consistently maintained that no Indian POWs are in its custody.

(c) and (d) The matter has been taken up on several occasions with Pakistan at various levels, including that of the Prime Minister. During his visit to Pakistan from 20-21 February, 1999, Prime Minister raised this issue with the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the two sides appointed a 2 member committee at Ministerial level to examine humanitarian issues, including that of the missing POWs.

The matter was also raised in the official level discussions held with Pakistan on March 5-6, 1999. The Pakistani side stated that there were no Indian POWs in its custody, but agreed to re-examine the matter afresh.